WHAT CYPRIOT CHILDREN THINK
ABOUT THE CONCEPT OF PEACE?[i]

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Abstract:

Cyprus is a Mediterranean island inhabited by two communities with a common culture, although they speak different languages. Efforts to reconcile these two communities, living apart from each other in different parts of the island since 1974, have become more important in recent years and efforts have been made to ensure a lasting solution on the island. Within the scope of these efforts, non-governmental organizations in Cyprus are also carrying out various studies with the support of the European Union. This is one of those studies, which was carried out with the support of the Grow Civil Program. The purpose of this study is to examine the metaphors of the Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot children created about the concept of peace. The study group consists of 23 children, aged between six and ten. Children were given a form written in Turkish and Greek languages with an expression on it as "Peace is like........ because.........." and they were asked to fill in the gaps. The obtained data were analyzed and reported by the content analysis method. Results indicate that the metaphors produced by Turkish Cypriot children are related to emotions, behaviors and individuals, while the Greek Cypriots' are related to space, aesthetic perception, and individuals. While politicians are seeking for a permanent solution on the island, non-governmental organizations and activists have been organizing various activities to increase mutual trust between the two communities. It is thought that this study will contribute to the bi-communal studies in Cyprus.

Keywords: children, Cyprus, peace, metaphor, perception

1. Introduction

The greatest factor in the emergence of this study is the two articles that I encountered while I was reviewing the literature in an evening. One of these articles mentioned a museum containing the toys of the children, who were forced to migrate to Australia,

had on a difficult journey and their migration memories (Henrich, 2014); and the other one was mentioning the museums where peace education could be provided (Dungen & Yamane, 2015). Both studies deeply affected me and made me think that such studies should be carried out in my country which a war was experienced that was not long ago. It was possible to start these studies only by researching how children perceive the concept of peace; that is what I did.

Cyprus is a Mediterranean island inhabited by two communities with a common culture, although they speak different languages. Efforts to reconcile these two communities, living apart from each other in different parts of the island since 1974, have become more important in recent years and efforts have been made to ensure a lasting solution on the island. The purpose of this study is to examine the metaphors of the Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot children about the concept of peace.

Peace and war are the concepts that cannot be considered separately and are often used together in the literature. According to Galtung, peace and war are generally about the relationship of people, groups or nations to each other (Hakvoort & Oppenheimer, 1998). While in some cultures, peace is used to be in good relationships with others and to express inner peace, in others it can be used to express international relations. In the context of international relations, the concept of peace is used in the sense of peace treaties, ceasefire and no violence (Groff, 2002).

One of the elements that provide the environment of peace is the inexistence of conflict between the nations. Simmel argues that conflicts arise from human interaction (Vestal & Jones, 2004). According to Danesh, children can often have disagreements starting from early ages. This can affect their worldviews on the conflict and attitudes towards violence in difficult situations (Lombardo & Polonko, 2015). Therefore, how children find solutions to disagreements also affect how they develop a perspective on the violence and resolution of problems related to violence, including their worldviews. At this point, there is a need for studies to be done about peace.

When children reach the age of seven or eight, they begin to develop ideas about peace and war (Hakvoort & Oppenheimer, 1998); after the age of 12, when abstract thought begins, they may interpret such concepts differently (Hakvoort & Oppenheimer, 1993). It is seen that while young children focus on the passive aspects of peace (lack of conflict, calmness, quietness), the children over the age of 11 are paying attention to the active aspects of peace (peace-making) (Galtung, 1969). Clearly, the age factor is an important variable in understanding the concepts of peace and war (Alvik, 1968). Furthermore, experiencing violence from early ages can also affect the process of children's becoming peaceful people (McLernon & Cairns, 2006). Moreover, conversations with their parents can also influence children's developing view on conflict, conflict solution, and conflict prevention (Alvik, 1968). Therefore, in the peace related studies, it is possible to come across the notions of war, conflict, and violence.

One of the leading studies on children's ideas about the concepts of peace and war, was carried out by Cooper (1965). Cooper has determined that children begin to develop ideas about peace and war around the age of six. While they have more ideas about the concept of war, they say fewer things about peace; and in their discourses,

there are tranquility, silence, no violence or war, and friendship concepts. After about 30 years, Hakvoort and Oppenheimer (1998) published a report on the perceptions of children and adolescents about the concepts of peace and war. The report shows that, peace is perceived as a concept that includes passive resistance (nonviolence) and social justice on its basis. Children's understanding of peace is related to how they perceive their social environment. In this context, it can be said that the families who are the closest circle of children, have great influence over elements such as resolving conflicts, providing justice and nonviolence.

Just like parents, teachers also have an effect on the children's worldviews about peace and conflict resolution. So much so that, in a study conducted by Vestal and Jones (2004), they have found that the children educated by the teachers who had peace-building and conflict resolution training have higher interpersonal problem-solving skills. Similarly, Lombardo and Polonko (2015) have noted that seeds of peace and conflict resolution are spread in childhood.

There are many studies in the world about how children perceive the concept of peace. In a survey carried out with Portuguese children, it has been observed that children talk about war or negative thoughts, while talking about peace. According to children, while peace is related to the absence of war, war does not mean that there is no peace; but is associated with adverse events such as conflict or fighting (Lourenço, 1999). In a similar study, the attitudes towards the concepts of peace, war, and violence of adolescents in Portugal, Brazil, Chile, Germany, and the United States were examined; the participants stated that they did not believe that all countries could come together to create a worldwide government, but they believed that the problems of violence in the world could be solved by education and mutual dialogue (Biaggio, De Souza & Martini, 2004).

McLernon and Cairns (2006) have stated that movement from war to peace with political changes creates opportunities to work on how the concepts of peace and war are perceived. Indeed, in the longitudinal study of these researchers in Northern Ireland, it was determined that the perceptions of children, whose ideas about peace and war had been taken in 1994, changed in the negative direction in 2002.

Like Ireland, Cyprus is also a divided island and a country worth doing studies about peace. Especially after the 2004 Annan Plan referendum, negotiations between the leaders have gained momentum to achieve a permanent solution on the island, and at times critical steps have been taken. In Cyprus, where conflict resolution, negotiation, and peace concepts are often used, and which left a war behind it about 50 years ago, it is important that we investigate the perceptions of the children, whose future we work for, about these concepts. On the other hand, the investigation of the perceptions of both Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot children regarding these concepts can also give clues about the view of both communities towards these concepts. To create a peace culture among societies is closely related to the positive attitudes of children towards peace and related concepts. Such that, for human rights and democracy, peace is the main objective of education, the development of universal values and modes of behavior, where peace culture is foreseen, in every individual (UNESCO, 1995).

2. Method

This research aims to examine the metaphorical perceptions of children about the concept of peace.

Metaphors describe something unknown with something known (Perry & Cooper, 2001). Forceville (2002) refers to the presence of at least three basic items in any metaphor relation, such as the theme of metaphor, the source of metaphor, properties that are considered to be attributed to metaphor. According to this, in the sentence 'the war is like a great destruction, because it drifts you into the darkness', the word 'war' is the subject of the metaphor; the word 'great destruction' is the source of metaphor; the statement 'because it drifts you into the darkness' shows the properties that are considered to be attributed to the metaphor from the source of metaphor.

2.1 Research Design

This study has been carried out with a qualitative approach. The phenomenological method from a qualitative research design was used. A researcher who uses the phenomenological method is interested in the life experiences of the people he or she will study (Holloway, 1997; Kvale, 1996). This study is a phenomenological research due to the fact that it deals with how children explain the concept of peace.

2.2 Study Group

The study group consists of 15 Turkish Cypriots and 8 Greek Cypriot children aged between six and ten. The average age of Turkish Cypriot children is 7.9; the average age of Greek Cypriot children is 6.4. Sixteen girls and seven boys participated in the study. The children were reached through private organizations located in the northern and southern parts of the island, with the approval of their families. Easily accessible, purposeful sampling method was used while determining the study group.

Table 1: The demographic characteristics of the participants

	Gender		Age
Origin	**Female**	**Male**	$\bar{x}$
Turkish Cypriot	12	4	7.9
Greek Cypriot	4	3	6.4
Total	16	7	7.3

2.3 Data Collection Tool

Children were given a form written in Turkish and Greek languages with an expression on it as 'Peace is like........, because..........' and they were asked to fill in the gaps. This question was asked verbally for children who do not know how to read and write, and their answers were noted on the form by the researcher.

Interviews made with children lasted approximately 15 minutes. The researcher had a one-to-one meeting with Turkish Cypriot children. While interviewing Greek Cypriot children, assistance was received from another researcher with a good knowledge of Greek; and data were collected from Greek Cypriot children under the

supervision of the researcher. In the children's metaphors regarding the concept of peace, it was tried to determine the relationship between the subject of metaphors and the source of metaphors with the word 'like' and the meaning attributed to the metaphor with the word 'because'.

2.4 Data Analysis

The obtained data were analyzed and reported by the content analysis method. The answers given by Greek Cypriot children were translated into Turkish with the help of an interpreter who has a good grasp of Greek and Turkish languages and the translation was controlled by a different expert. The analysis process was started by adding Turkish data to the translated data.

Data analysis was carried out in three stages. In the first stage, the metaphors developed by each child were transferred to the computer environment. In the second stage, the metaphors were listed, examined in terms of their common characteristics, associated with a certain category and conceptual categories were established. In the third stage, operations were carried out to ensure validity and reliability. The metaphors and the explanation of the metaphors specified by children were examined by the researcher, the codes were determined and the themes were formed. To ensure the internal reliability, the researcher took the opinion of an expert who conducts his work on the basis of a qualitative research approach, is from the field of educational sciences and has previous metaphor studies. The expert read the metaphor explanations independent of the researcher and evaluated the themes. After the consensus was achieved, it was written in a clear, comprehensible and distinct manner how it was reached the collected data and results; direct quotation was given; the researcher was objective at each stage of the study and the data were kept in such a way as to allow other investigators to examine it.

3. Findings

Out of the 23 children who participated in the study, only 13 filled out the data collection tool completely. These children filled in the gap starting with 'because' on the data collection tool and explained the features they attributed to the metaphors they produced. The remaining children only gave information about the first part. On the other hand, unlike the others, a child among the participants produced two metaphors. Metaphors produced by all children were evaluated without any sorting of the obtained data. In this part of the study, analysis of the metaphors produced by Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot children, and the meanings they attributed to these metaphors were included.

Table 2: Metaphors developed by Turkish Cypriot children for the concept of peace

Metaphors	f	%	Metaphors	f	%
Friendship	5	31.25	Being in harmony	1	6.25
Love	2	12.5	Regret	1	6.25
Respect	1	6.25	Getting involved	1	6.25
Playing games	1	6.25	Kissing	1	6.25
Hugging	1	6.25	Romance	1	6.25
A good-hearted person	1	6.25			
Total				**16**	**100**

Turkish Cypriot children produced a total of 11 metaphors related to the concept of peace. The dominant one from these metaphors is friendship (n=5). Following the metaphor of friendship, the most repeated metaphor is love (n=2). Apart from these metaphors, respect (n=1), playing games (n=1), hugging (n=1), a good-hearted person (n=1), being in harmony (n=1), regret (n=1), getting involved (n=1), kissing (n=1) and romance (n=1) were produced.

Table 3: Distribution of the features attributed to the developed metaphors

Categories	Attributes attributed to metaphors	n	%
Behavior	We must all be loving and respectful, we hug when we make peace, if people are harmonious in society there is peace, if we get involved with each other we become friends, I kiss my friend when I make peace with him, when people are not on speaking terms they must make peace with each other, friends treat each other well.	7	53.8
Emotions	Friendship is very beautiful, we regret when we are estranged from our friends, we like the friend we make peace with, when we make peace with our friend we feel it, you feel good in peace.	5	38.5
Emotional support	My friend is with me in my hard times.	1	7.7
Total		**13**	**100**

The attributes to the metaphors of 13 children developed about the concept of peace have been collected under three categories. It is observed that the meanings attributed to the produced metaphors were collected under the heading of 'behavior' (n=7) with the highest rate of 53.8%.

'Peace is like hugging, because we hug when we make peace.' (C3)

'Peace is like being in harmony, because if people are harmonious in society there is peace there.' (C6)

'Peace is like kissing, because I kiss my friend when I make peace with him.' (C10)

Another category to which the most meaning is attributed to children is the category of 'emotions' (n=5). In addition to treating it as a form of behavior, 38.5% of the children also considered the concept of peace as a concept related to emotions.

'Peace is like regret, because we regret when we become estranged from our friends.' (C7)

'Peace is like friendship, because when we make peace with our friend we feel it.' (C11)

'Peace is like a good-hearted person, because you feel good in peace.' (C12)

Finally, the feature attributed to the metaphor produced by only one of the children was evaluated under the 'emotional support' category.

'Peace is like friendship, because my friend is with me in my hard times.' (C5)

Considering the metaphors created for the concept of peace and the features attributed to these metaphors, it can be said that the children are in a positive attitude towards the concept of peace.

Table 4: Metaphors developed by Greek Cypriot children for the concept of peace

Metaphors	f	%	Metaphors	f	%
My school	2	25	Sea	1	12.5
Heaven	1	12.5	Playing ball	1	12.5
Rainbow	1	12.5	Child	1	12.5
Bride	1	12.5			
Total				**8**	**100**

Greek Cypriot children produced eight metaphors in total for the concept of peace. Among these metaphors, the dominant one is my school (n=2). Apart from these, the metaphors of heaven (n=1), rainbow (n=1), bride (n=1), sea (n=1), playing ball (n=1) and child (n=1) were produced.

Table 5: An overview of the metaphors developed by all the participants

Metaphors	f	%	Metaphors	f	%
Friendship	5	20.8	Being in harmony	1	4.1
My school	2	8.3	Heaven	1	4.1
Love	2	8.3	Regret	1	4.1
Playing games	2	8.3	Getting involved	1	4.1
Respect	1	4.1	Kissing	1	4.1
Hugging	1	4.1	Romance	1	4.1
Good-hearted person	1	4.1	Rainbow	1	4.1
Bride	1	4.1	Child	1	4.1
Sea	1	4.1			
Total				**24**	**100**

The children who participated in the study produced a total of 24 metaphors. The most repeated ones among these metaphors are friendship (n=5), my school (n=2) love (n=2) and playing games (n=2).

Table 6: Distribution of developed metaphors according to the categories

Categories	Attributes attributed to metaphors	n	%
Behavior	Respect, playing, hugging, harmonizing, getting involved, kissing.	7	29,2
Emotions	Love, regret, romance.	4	16,6
Emotional support	Friendship.	5	20,8
Place	My school, sea, heaven.	4	16,6
Aesthetic perception	Bride, rainbow.	2	8,3
Individuals	A good-hearted person, child.	2	8,3
Total		**24**	**100**

While the metaphors produced by Turkish Cypriot children are related to emotions, behaviors and individuals, it draws attention that the metaphors produced by Greek Cypriot children are related to space, aesthetic perception, and individuals.

4. Discussion and Conclusion

Children, participating in the study, developed metaphors related to behaviors, emotions, emotional support, space, aesthetic perception, and individuals. While Turkish Cypriot children concentrated on behaviors and emotions, Greek Cypriot children were found to produce metaphors more on space and aesthetic perception. According to Groff (2002), in some cultures, the concept of peace is used to be in good relations with others and to express tranquility. In order to establish good relationships, it is necessary to display good behaviors. Displaying good behavior is possible with having good emotions towards the other side. On the other hand, the design of a space to support inner peace can help that person to develop a positive attitude about that space. This attitude gives happiness to the person when combined with positive life experiences. It is natural that children who feel happy and peaceful in their surroundings naturally relate these places to the concept of peace. As a matter of fact, in a study with pre-school and primary school children, it was seen that children associated the concept of peace with quietness and privacy that represents tranquility (Tephly, 1985).

Turkish Cypriot children mostly associated the concept of peace with the metaphor of friendship. Apart from this, metaphors such as love, playing games, hugging, being in harmony, kissing, regret have also been developed. A similar finding was found in the study by Gürkan, Bayram and Arslan (2008) made. In their study, it was seen that primary school students associated the concept of peace with happiness and happiness was explained by embracing, apologizing, getting along with others, holding hands and playing games; fourth graders, on the other hand, described this concept as happiness, cheer, celebration, legal or social regulations (Gürkan, Bayram & Arslan, 2008). Friendship is based on a person's feeling peaceful and valuable; it represents relationships between people connected by deep bonds (Wright, 1978). Therefore, we show love to our friends. Children play with their loved ones and in this way, they show their love for them (Buhrmester & Furman, 1986).

In the study he conducted with Portuguese children, aged between five and twelve, Lourenço (1999) pointed out that the children used the concept of war while

explaining the concept of peace. So much so that, it was concluded in the other studies conducted that the concept of war developed in children before the concept of peace (Hakvoort, 1996) and that children had more knowledge of the concept of war than the concept of peace (Hall, 1993). Although peace and war are often used together, none of the children who participated in this study talked about the concept of war. However, they used the concept of being estranged from a friend in relation to the dispute. They, therefore, emphasized that disagreements could upset the peaceful environment. In a peaceful environment, there should be no dispute. One of the children said that the concept of peace meant regret; he told he regretted being on the outs with a friend. Therefore, he expressed the absence of a peaceful environment with a negative feeling. Unlike the others, a child said that peace is about society's being in harmony. Galtung (1969) stated that the children under the age of 11 associated peace with the absence of a dispute, in other words with harmony, and older ones associated it with respect for people. On the other hand, as Rosell (1968) noted, children's perceptions of concepts are closely related to their mental or intellectual development. Therefore, they can perceive concepts in different forms at different ages. This judgment is consistent with the findings of the study.

As a result of the study, it is seen that the children who participated in the study produced positive metaphors for the concept of peace, they never talked about war; instead, the absence of peace is expressed by the words 'being estranged from a friend' and 'regret'.

7. Recommendations

The meanings that Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot children have attributed to the concept of peace can shed light on the people, institutions, organizations, and politicians who are in the effort to reconcile the two communities in Cyprus. In particular, ensuring that people in politics look at political problems through the eyes of children can contribute to the better shaping of the children's future.

While politicians are seeking for a permanent solution on the island, non-governmental organizations and activists have been organizing various activities to increase mutual trust between the two communities. It is thought that this study will contribute to the bi-communal studies in Cyprus.

A similar of this study, done with a limited number of children, can be carried out more broadly with the children of different regions and different socio-economic levels of Cyprus.

Our feelings and thoughts about the concept of peace can vary as we get older. Just as it is in different countries (McLernon & Cairns, 2006), longitudinal studies can also be conducted in Cyprus.

In order to obtain a permanent solution on the island about the Cyprus issue, both Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots need to make an effort in this regard. The permanence of the solution is related to the maintenance of the agreement, which is to be made for a solution, by both sides. Therefore, we should raise our children as

peaceful people. In this context, the studies for peace education both on the north and south of the island should be disseminated and intensified.

Acknowledgements

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